

Garden Gates

A garden gate is an entrance that opens through a fence, hedge or wall. Your gate, like your garden, says something about you. You can see personalities in gates. They do not have to say, "Keep out." Gates can provide hard architectural lines, complimentary textures or colors, or a foundation on which plant life can grow.

Whether designed for a quick exit or a grand entry, a good garden gate requires a bit of forethought. Ask yourself, should your gate provide protection or privacy? Do you want security with an open view, or perhaps to emphasize a visually attractive garden space? Will your gate be a main entrance that will make a strong impression or simply a decorative ornament for the garden?

Consider existing plantings and the style of your garden. Is it a lush woodland garden abundant with ferns, a southwest garden filled with succulents or a Victorian garden with climbing roses? The most important consideration is to ensure that the style of gate complements the style of house and garden. If the home includes wrought iron decorative features, then a gate in a similar style and made of the same materials will be in keeping with the style of the house and harmonize with the whole property.

Some gates are constructed solidly and are part of the wall or fence, offering both complete privacy and security at the same time. Entry through them is by invitation only. These gates should be stained and/or painted as part of the whole wall.

Materials like powder-coated aluminum are virtually maintenance free and can be made in many styles which can contribute decorative character to a garden. These don't need to be stylized in a botanical or garden motif but can contribute a purely linear or abstract patterned element to a garden. The gate can simply be the suggestion of an entrance. Offset screens at either side of the pathway can frame the entrance to the garden. This design combined with paving stones and/or gravel, guides visitors through the space.

To a plant lover, nothing is quite as forlorn as a gate without a garden of burgeoning plants. Plants soften a gate's harsh lines and surround its rigid surfaces with textural contrast. Use plants to help convey your garden gate's personality. There are some practical considerations that have to be made. The wider the gate the heavier it will be, and consequently the stronger the gate posts will need to be. Gates should only open inward so they don't block the footpath or cause injury to passers-by. Your garden gate design is limited only by your imagination, so have fun with it.

